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MR. WINSLOW'S DISCOURSE

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF

SUSTAINING THE LAW.

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THE

IMPORTANCE OF

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SUSTAINING THE LAW.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED IN BOWDOIN-STREET CHURCH,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 1839.

BY REV. HUBBARD WINSLOW.

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NOTICE.

THIS Discourse was preached extemporaneously. In committing it to paper the Author has given both the substance and language of the original, as nearly as he can recollect; but the hearer, who may read this discourse, will probably find in it some thoughts and expressions, which he did not hear, and remember to have heard some, which he does not find. It is hoped that its publication will contribute, in some humble measure, to aid and encourage the friends of law and of temperance.

DISCOURSE.

TITUS iii: 1.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

IT has become so common to say an important crisis has arrived, that the remark almost provokes an involuntary smile. Nevertheless the remark may be verily true. For in these days events mature so rapidly, and rush with such fire-sped velocity to their consummation, that crisises of various and deep moment thicken fast upon us. The present is to this community undoubtedly a very important crisis. A great and momentous civil and moral question is now pending. That question is none other than this, Whether the government of this ancient and excellent Commonwealth is to be honored and obeyed, or whether it is to be contemned and set at nought. The question is, whether these venerable institutions, which were planted and reared by the pious wisdom of our fa-

thers, are to be perpetuated and handed down to posterity, or whether they are to be swept away by the besom of destruction, to be numbered among the melancholy ruins of other republics and other ages.

I am not now to discuss at large the abstract merits of the *temperance law*. The main question before us is not whether the law itself is expedient or inexpedient, desirable or undesirable; it is enough that it is a LAW of the Commonwealth. Suffice it here to say, that our legislators, chosen by the free will of the people, and acting in their delegated official capacity, after protracted and mature deliberation, enacted this law; that it was duly approved by the council, ratified and confirmed by his Excellency, and sent forth clothed with the same authority which invests all the other laws of the land. That nothing touching it might be done with haste, and that the will of the sovereign people might be fully consulted, it was enacted that the law should not go into effect—that is, should not become a law of the land—until the expiration of one whole year; thus giving to the subsequent legislature, to consist of members chosen anew by the people, opportunity to reconsider the law, and giving to all citizens ample time to prepare for it. A subsequent legislature, after expending much time, talents, wealth and labor in considering and discussing the merits of the law, declared against a reconsideration, and left it in its original integrity to go into effect. The time for its going into effect has come; it is now an established and operative law of the Commonwealth, as binding on the citizens as are the laws respecting theft, arson, murder, or any other law of the statutes.

And now this law ought to be sustained by all the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Civil government is an ordinance of God, and obedience thereto is expressly enjoined by his authority. All are familiar with the tremendous sanctions with which civil laws were divinely invested under the ancient dispensation, and with the heavy and unyielding penalties inflicted on those who refused obedience. Judgment was executed speedily upon the offender, whether to death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.* Under the new dispensation we find Jesus Christ doing entire homage to all civil laws and magistrates, and enjoining the same upon his disciples. "Render unto Caesar," said he, "the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's;"† thus in the same breath making it as truly our religious duty to obey the laws of the land as the laws of God. He even wrought a miracle to provide for himself and his disciples the means of paying tribute, and that too when of strict right they were entitled to go free, that he might avoid all possible appearance of insubordination to existing civil authorities.‡ The apostles, acting and uttering by divine inspiration, did and taught the same. "Let every soul," say they, "be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."—"Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."|| "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that

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*Ezra 7: 26. †Matt. 22: 21. ‡Matt. 27: 26. ||Rom. 13: 1–2, 5.

do well."* "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work."† "Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor."‡ Such are our divinely enjoined obligations to render strict obedience to civil government. Nothing less than an express law of God can exonerate us from the obligation to obey a law of the land; this can never happen excepting when a civil law demands what the law of God forbids. In all other cases, as in the case of every statute of this Commonwealth, obedience to civil law is an express precept of the divine law, and is solemnly enjoined by God himself. The man therefore who breathes a whisper or lifts a finger against subjection to the civil law in question, who either breaks it himself or encourages others to break it, who does not even give his positive influence to sustain it, is acting the part of rebellion against God.

The principle of obedience to every civil law, or unlimited anarchy, is the only alternative. What is anarchy but that desperate state of things in which men do as they please, irrespective of law? And the principle which allows *one* law to be trampled upon, will allow *every* law to be trampled upon, according as the blind and tempestuous passions of men may dictate. The principle of no-government is practically admitted, the dreadful work of universal demolition is actually begun, the moment a single law is by any means wrested from the hands of the civil authorities. Allow the law to be annulled and anarchy to prevail in the present instance,

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*1 Peter 2: 13. †Titus 3: 1. ‡Rom. 13: 7.

and an entering wedge is admitted to work the overthrow of the republic. The same cause which may annihilate this law, which was enacted to protect virtue and suppress vice, may equally annihilate the laws which protect your property, your dwellings, your altars, your lives, and all that you hold dear.

Most men have feeble conceptions of the horrible evils of anarchy. Would you know what they are, read the histories of the various anarchies, which have from time to time swept like whirlwinds over the nations. Mark well the desolation and woe which have ever attended them. Read the history of the *Jews*, after the death of Joshua, when there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes; and still subsequently, till at length by turmoils within, more than by force without, they were utterly destroyed as a nation and scattered abroad over the earth;—of the republics of *Greece*, and of the proud empire of *Rome*, after long and agonizing struggles laid prostrate in ruins by the ruthless spirit of insubordination, not less than by the savage hords of the North;—of *Germany*, during and after the time of Richard, duke of Cornwall, when nothing was too sacred to be sacrificed to the spirit of misrule;—of *Poland*—unhappy, distracted Poland—bleeding at every pore during the oft recurring periods of her interregnums;—of *England*, from the time of Cromwell till the restoration by Charles, when with multitudes it was a question whether death or life were most to be desired;—and especially of *France*—atheistic, tumultuous, oft revolutionized France—where, during successive reigns of anarchy and terror, property, virtue, humanity, religion, and life itself, have all been trampled down together like dust upon the ground. Consider withal that anarchy is

but a step from the most absolute and iron-hearted tyranny.

Shall we then for a moment admit the practical operation of a principle which leads to all this? But our ears are perpetually assailed with the cry of the demagogue, *Liberty! Liberty!—the rights of the people!* And what *are* the rights of a republican people? It is truly a grave and important question. Theirs is ever the liberty and the right, through their constitutionally delegated authorities, to *make* or *repeal* laws, but never to *break* laws. It is the duty of every republican citizen to express his choice at the polls in regard to laws and rulers; after that the question of their existence and supremacy passes entirely out of his hands; nothing remains for him to do but to render to them implicit obedience, till the period arrives for another election. Whether they are such as he desires or not, does not affect his duty to obey them; his only resort is to the polls. So long as they are sustained by the choice of the majority, constitutionally expressed, so long must every citizen either obey them, or quit the republic, or be treated as an offender. There is no possible alternative between this and anarchy. The man who inculcates any other doctrine, and countenances transgression of the civil law under the imposing plea of the peoples' rights, is a bad man, a dangerous citizen, an enemy to the republic. If he does not know better, he should be sent to school; if he *does* know better, he should be sent to the house of correction.

The duty of sustaining the civil law, always obligatory, should be felt to be especially so by every true citizen at the present time, owing to the prevalence of a strong, indomitable, determined spirit of insubordination and trea-

son. Insubordination to civil law and authority is the handmaid of treason, and treason is justly esteemed the highest and most desperate civil crime, inasmuch as it aims a fatal blow at the very heart of government itself. Yet the evil spirit to which I refer is stalking fearlessly abroad through our land. It has within a few years manifested itself in numerous ways and places. It is the same that hurled the torch and kindled the flames upon the convent in Charlestown; the same that has moved to deeds of lawless violence against those who have espoused the doctrines and measures of abolitionism; the same that has often attempted to arrest the due course of law, and set at defiance the men engaged to sustain it; the same, in a word, that has of late years so frequently sacrificed the property, invaded the republican rights, and jeopardized the lives of our fellow citizens, in almost every large town and city throughout the land. Charlestown is not alone. Let the deeds of Troy, of Utica, of Alton, of Baltimore, of Philadelphia, of New York, of Providence, yea, and of Boston, address us in tones of solemn admonition.

Whatever may be said of improprieties and indiscretions on the part of the assailed, affords no apology for the lawless conduct of the assailants. However odious and unjustifiable the measures of a portion of citizens, it is still the same civil and moral crime to deal with them in any other than a lawful manner.

But this ruthless spirit has perhaps in no instance evinced itself in a more bold and dangerous manner, than in its hostility to the temperance law. It is said that there are those among us, who have deliberately and openly avowed that they do not acknowledge the claims of the law, and have determined that they will not obey

it. It is said, but I hope it is not true, that several men have even contributed *money*, to a considerable amount, for the express purpose of encouraging transgression and resisting attempts to enforce obedience, by defraying penalties and procuring the services of men at the bar. Has it then come to this? In this excellent commonwealth of Massachusetts, and even in this orderly city of Boston, are there to be found those who are bold to presume that they can be sustained for a moment by public sentiment in such a course?—those who walk unblushingly among us, and claim to be respected as worthy citizens, while thus instigating and defending rebellion against the peace and law of the state! What would we think of men, who should contribute money for the express purpose of encouraging a portion of their fellow citizens to commit burglary, theft, robbery, murder, and other similar deeds? Yet the principle here is precisely the same. It is rebellion against the authority of law in the one case, as truly as in the other.

No man is to be blamed for having opposed the *enactment* of the law, if he supposed the law to be injudicious; nor for having used lawful means to get it *repealed*. And all citizens are to be commended, for strongly desiring that it may not be made an engine of political action. The true merits of the case rise high above political partizan considerations; they present to citizens of every name and party the one great question, whether the laws of the land are to be obeyed. To this question there is but one and the same answer to be given in the practice of every true republican, whatever be his political creed or party. There is then no apology for those who attempt to evade the claims of this law, by the plea that it is the creature of party politics or sectarian zealots.

The plea is utterly false; and even if it were true, it is without any force. Let it be remembered, moreover, that this plea has always served to open the favorite door through which insubordination, headed by designing demagogues, has invaded and destroyed republics. Impassioned appeals to party spirit, prejudice, and jealousy, exciting hostility to particular laws, gradually weakens the authority and saps the foundation of *all* law, and finally levels the entire government with the dust.

The danger with republican governments is always on the side of anarchy. All our danger is upon that side. Our tendencies are strongly downward in that direction. If this spirit of insubordination is allowed to go on in our country, the time will come when no law will be sacred; when property will have no value, virtue no protection, and life itself no security; when families will lie down at night, not to enjoy

> Kind nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,

but to weary out the long hours of its darkness and peril in anxious vigils; when all our large cities and towns will become scenes of perpetual turmoil, confiscation, and destruction; when the bloody car of anarchy, let loose and impelled by a "reign of terror," will roll furiously over the land, and paleness will sit upon all faces and trembling pervade all hearts. Such scenes will be acted over here as have been realized in other nations, such as the prophet portrayed when he wrote, "Judgment is far from us, neither doth justice overtake us; we wait for light, but behold obscurity, for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men."—"And judgment is turned away backward, and

justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." From these scenes of anarchy and revolution be our beloved country forever delivered!

Our argument for sustaining and enforcing this law has been addressed to Christians, philanthropists, and friends of the republic. For the sake of the stability and honor of our government, if for no other reason, all such will espouse the cause of this law; they will determine to make a fair experiment of its merits, before they will even encourage lawful measures to alter or repeal it. Let us at least allow as long a time to test the law, as we took to make it. If, after a few years of faithful experiment, the law shall prove to be evil, then let all agree to repeal or alter it. But if it shall prove to be a wise, humane, and desirable law—if it shall be found to promote temperance, virtue, thrift, happiness—if it shall induce those who have been ministering to the vices and miseries of their fellow men, to engage in other and better employments—if it shall help to banish crime, prevent human suffering, raise up the poor out of the dust and lift the needy out of the dunghill—if it shall serve to elevate and perpetuate our republican liberties, and to advance the true welfare of the great people—then will all good citizens declare, with one strong voice, that this law of 1838 must stand and be honored as long as the republic endures.

But as this law must for a while war directly against the customs, appetites, and supposed interests of many, its execution demands particular attention. It is not to be accomplished without a severe and somewhat protracted struggle. It is then an important inquiry, What are our several duties respecting it?

It is the duty of all, in the first place, to assure themselves of the entire practicability of carrying the law into effect. Respecting this, some have doubted. Let that doubt be forever banished. They that be for the law, are more than they that be against it. The mere fact that the law exists, is proof of this. And especially when we consider the virtue, the intelligence, the influence, the sobriety and weight of character, of the friends of the law; and more especially, when we consider that obedience to it, is demanded by the high sanctions of heaven; remains there a doubt on which side the strength lies? Let all the friends of the law then be firm and decided. Everlasting strength is with them. Victory is surely theirs, if they do their duty.

Our JUDGES have in this matter a very solemn and responsible duty. They are the pillars of the state; the execution of law depends primarily and essentially upon them. No man is to be more highly honored than the faithful judge. True to his sacred trust, he sits calmly and firmly on the throne of judgment, and amidst the conflicting opinions, arguments, passions, prejudices and interests, which surround and assail him, declares impartially the law, the whole law, and nothing but the law, without fear or favor of man. It is not the business of the judge to decide what he supposes the law *ought* to be, nor to substitute in place of its penalties his own personal sanctions and admonitions; he is to decide what the law actually *is*, and to carry into effect its original and full intent. It is believed that no state has ever been honored with more learned, profound, and righteous judges, than is this commonwealth at the present moment. In the hands of our judges, this law has nothing to fear.

Our LAWYERS also have it in their power to do vast good or evil in respect to this law. Possessing in large measure the treasures of legal science, and well practiced in the skill of using it to serve their purpose, they can defend or prevert the meaning and claims of the civil statutes more than any other class of men. It is their business to educe and consider evidence, to illustrate and apply the law, and so to commend and exhibit them, in all particular cases, as to guide and assist in executing the true spirit of the civil statutes. No secular calling is superior to theirs for dignity and importance. Wo to those lawyers, who, for the paltry consideration of a little gold dust, or from the base motives of selfish or party ambition, desecrate their noble calling to the vile purpose of feeding the jealousy and inciting the hostile passions of the weak and the wicked against the law and welfare of the state. They may be cheered for a brief day with hopes of gain, and with the hosannas of the lawless rabble, but soon and surely will the voice of a virtuous and indignant community, and the louder voice of offended heaven, fall upon their doomed heads in prolonged and heavy thunder, "Wo unto you, lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."* Of all men in a republic the demagogue lawyer is most dangerous; he is most to be execrated, most to be shunned. But heaven wide from this is the prevailing character of the Massachusetts bar. Gentlemen whose social, moral, and political integrity, is not surpassed by the extent of their legal science, nor their ability to use it, they have both the disposition and the power to sus-

*Luke 11: 52.

tain and defend this law in the minds of every honest jury in the commonwealth. They will do it.

Our CIVIL OFFICERS have also an arduous and important service. They are set as sentinels to protect the peace of the State and the sacredness of her injunctions; to see that all her commands are honored; to arrest every offender and conduct him through all the forms of the legal process to its full and final results. It is greatly to be desired, that they should execute their commission in a manner to irritate and provoke offence as little as possible, and yet in a manner which precludes all suspicion of pusilanimity—that they should do it with calm firmness, gentle force, quiet but resistless determination. They are sustained in so doing with the assurance, that they are clothed with the solemn majesty of law; that the will of the great and sovereign people is with them, and, more than this, the almighty will of heaven. Invested with such authority, a single officer is an overmatch for a large and stormy multitude. One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.* "Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."† To offer violence or resistance to a civil officer, is an act of high handed insult both against the State and against God; it therefore merits and receives the heaviest of penalties. Let the civil officer consider, that when he is

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* Deut. 22: 30. † Rom. 13 : 3, 4.

standing upon the foundation of the civil statutes, he is standing upon a rock; although the tumultuous and menacing waves of lawless and angry passions may lift up their heads and dash against him, he is not to be moved. Let him well understand, and let all men take knowledge, that when he is executing the high demand of law, he is immortal, invulnerable, and irresistible. As no weapon can prevail against him, so no resistance can stand before him. His arms are iron and his nerves steel. Our officers well know their duty, and we have the best of assurance that they will perform it to the letter.

Editors have an important duty. The practically estimated sanction of the civil law in public sentiment, is much at their disposal. It is so, at least, so long as they do not vibrate so wide of the truth as to forfeit confidence. Multitudes will think and act respecting this law, as their newspaper teaches. They will regard the editor as the echo of the prevailing will of the people, and the prevailing will of the people as deciding both the claims and the destiny of the law. Let not editors forbear seasonably to speak out the whole truth respecting it. They will be supported and cheered by the best sympathies and influences of the land. By calmly and judiciously espousing the supremacy and sanctions of the law; by taking sides firmly, but not overbearingly, with government, order, temperance, and humanity; they may speak a word in season, which will tell to incalculable advantage, in this important crisis, on the opinions and conduct of their great reading republic.

Ministers of the gospel are by no means exempted from a duty in respect to this subject. While party politics ought never to invade the sacred desk, subjects of a great moral and religious interest like this, involving the

christian character and welfare of the hearers, ought not to be excluded. The pulpit is a throne of mighty moral power. No other men contribute so much to form the conscience and the moral sentiments of the people, as the preachers of christianity. Indeed it is not to be questioned, that with the pulpits of this land the laws of this land must stand or fall. And when we are divinely instructed that civil governments are an ordinance of God, when we consider with what imperious tones of authority Jesus Christ and his apostles enjoined strict obedience to every law as a religious duty, how can christian ministers expect to be accounted faithful, if they altogether hold their peace in such a cause as this? Let a word of encouragement go forth from every pulpit to the friends of the law; let solemn and earnest appeals be made to the consciences of all men; let plain, direct, specific instructions respecting what ought to be done, be everywhere imparted in the kind and benevolent spirit of the gospel; and the effect cannot fail to be most powerful and benign.

Finally, ALL THE CITIZENS OF THIS COMMONWEALTH have duties and privileges, of no ordinary measure, connected with this law. Who cannot do so much as to say, that he loves the government under which he lives and is determined to sustain it? Who cannot, without descending to measures that savor of meanness, or are justly obnoxious to odium, faithfully perform whatever providentially falls to him in the way of exposing transgression and securing the legitimate designs of the law? What female is there, who cannot at least declare her sympathy in favor of the law? And who has yet to learn that virtuous female sympathy is, in every good cause, very powerful? Who is so obscure and unimportant, that he cannot cause the voice of his supplication to be heard in heaven, implor-

ing of Him in whose hands are the hearts of rulers and subjects, that our officers may be peace and our exactors righteousness; that wisdom and knowledge may be the stability of our times, and strength of salvation; that the fear of the Lord may be our treasure. *

And especially cannot all good citizens, on occasions of anticipated excitements connected with the execution of the law, unless summoned by the civil authorities, stay quietly at home and attend to their honest business, instead of choaking up the avenues, incommoding their neighbors, and crowding into the places of confusion and riot. Such tumultuous scenes would thus be brought to an end. When none are seen to engage in them but the men who wear rum-burnt faces, even they will soon become ashamed of them. The execution of the law will then go quietly and quickly forth to its results. No longer enioying the notice and sympathy of his fellows as a suffering victim of oppression, his illusive romance of heroic defiance of law being dispelled, the transgressor will then find that the process of civil justice is indeed a sober and painful reality; he will be compelled to feel, alone and uncheered, the cold iron of offended law in his heart, till the conviction shall take effect that the way of transgressors is hard and it is best to offend no more.

I have argued the importance of sustaining this law on the general principle of the claims of our civil government. But it may be conclusively shown that this law itself, or something tantamount to it, is good and desirable. There are two means of forming and protecting human virtue, the one that of aiming directly to establish the

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* Isaiah 60: 17. 33: 6.

soul in right principles and purposes within, the other that of removing temptations without. Christianity inculcates both of these means. We cannot honestly pray, "Lead us not into temptation," unless we also endeavor to put those temptations, which are too strong for our virtue, out of our way. Now it is demonstrated that alcohol, promiscuously exposed, bought and sold, as it has hitherto been, is one of the most fatal temptations to evil that ever infested human society. This law would remove it. It is not a law to enforce religion, nor to favor any religious sect. If it were, it would be inexpedient and unconstitutional. It is intended solely to prevent those secular vices over which, as the guardian of the public welfare, it is the legitimate province of civil governments to legislate. Whether the law is in the best possible shape to secure its object, I leave for legislators to determine; but its intention is to annihilate from the land all those places of promiscuous retailing, where men of weak virtue and strong appetites are wont to assemble, and where, excited and overcome by peculiar and urgent temptation, they are impelled downward to ruin. This law regards such places and indulgencies in the light of public nuisances and as such prohibits them, on the same principle that it prohibits gaming, gambling, lotteries, and other practices which paralize industry and destroy the public morals. It classes alcohol (where it clearly belongs) with the other powerful and dangerous agents, such as arsenic, opium, gun-powder, &c. respecting which government finds it necessary, for the sake of the public welfare, to enact strict laws and severe penalties.

It is proved by analysis and experiments, that alcohol is a very powerful and active, but fascinating and deceitful poison—that is, a deranger of the natural and

healthful functions of the physical constitution—that it is not only unnecessary but highly injurious to persons in health, and that, taken beyond a small quantity at a time, it produces instant death; and taken in small quantities, for a considerable period, vitiates the entire system, and brings its victim under the power of a morbid and ungovernable appetite, which hurries him rapidly through deeds of vice to the grave. It is one of the greatest destroyers of human virtue, happiness, and life, ever known in our world. Is it not then the duty of the legislature to institute over it a strict vigilance?

And whose rights does this law invade? Not theirs, surely, who do not deal in rum and do not drink it. Nor theirs who have occasion to use it in the arts; for it is still as accessible to them as ever. Nor theirs who need it for sickness, or other domestic uses; for the law provides for such. Nor theirs who are still determined to drink it daily as a beverage; for the law leaves open a way by which they can procure it in the most economical and convenient manner. Nor yet theirs who are engaged in the making and vending of the restricted article. For what right have they, superior to that which the makers and sellers of other dangerous articles have, to enrich themselves at the expense of the public welfare? The law does not say that no alcohol shall be imported, manufactured, sold, or drank; it simply declares that it shall not be exposed and sold in those ways which corrupt the public morals and undermine the foundations of our republican institutions, by flooding the land with drunkenness, poverty, misery, and crime. Is this an invasion of human rights? Then is all law so, and we are cast at once upon the sublime wisdom and tender mercies of the no-government theory.

Nearly all the drunkenness in our country originates not in the domestic circle, nor yet in solitude, but in places of social resort. The man who never cares nor thinks about rum, when at home engaged in his business, on entering the store or bar-room, and seeing the decanters sparkle, and his companions enjoying their glasses; on smelling the delicious beverage, and being urged to participate; often finds all his good intentions instantly overcome. The temptation is too strong for his feeble virtue. Such temptations, repeatedly gaining the victory over him, at length break down all his good principles, unnerve his spirit, render him wholly irresolute and helpless, and finally leave him helpless to the caprice of morbid, tormenting, and destructive appetites. Thousands of our fellow citizens are thus annually made captives and hurried away to destruction, who might be rescued by the removal of this temptation. Ought it not then to be by law removed?

This law, if carried into full operation, while it will injure none, will prove a great blessing to all classes. While it will remove from the unhappy class of rum-drinkers their most besetting and fatal temptation, and thus greatly diminish their tormenting desire to drink, it will also prevent their being so much imposed upon by base adulterations and exorbitant prices. If they must and will drink rum, is it not humane in the law to see that they obtain the pure article, and at the most economical rate? It has been said that this law is oppressive to the poor, by taking from them their beverage. The truth is, there is no class towards whom it is more humane. Grant that the effect of it will be to prevent their drinking rum at all;—that is the very end to be desired; and it will be gained by only presenting to them, in a true and strong light, the real motives to abandon it,

The law would undeceive them; it would teach them to cease to regard that as their beverage which is their destruction, and those men as their true friends who are fattening upon their purse and their life-blood.

The law will also prove a blessing to all virtuous and industrious citizens, who pay taxes and drink no rum. Such are continually paying heavy taxes, to support the drunkenness and pauperism produced by the promiscuous sale and use of ardent spirits. The poor-tax in a single county in this state, last year, was over *sixty thousand dollars;* and it was ascertained that nine tenths of it was occasioned by intoxicating liquors. This is a burden which every mechanic, every farmer, every merchant, every professional man, must help to sustain from his hard earnings. He must do it, even at the expense of the comfort and education of his own family. Moreover, how much cheaper will provisions become, if the immense quantities of grain now consumed in distilleries shall be devoted to their natural purposes. Is it not then the duty of government to exonerate its worthy citizens from these unnecessary burdens? Ought not government to consult the true interests of the virtuous and deserving, as much as the lusts of the covetous or the appetites of the wicked?

This law will, in the result, operate to the advantage even of those hitherto engaged in the sale of ardent spirits. Many of them have for some time wished to divest their business of this branch of traffic, but they have not seen the way clear to do it without offending and losing some of their customers. This law will of course be their apology and defence. To those whose business is so situated, or whose minds are so disposed, that they feel at present unwilling to relinquish this traffic, it may occasion some temporary inconvenience; but it will be

only temporary. Surer customers, safer and more regular business, the increasing success of every department of enterprize—giving them more profit from other sources; and last, but not least, relief from that uncomfortable state of mind, better understood as felt than as described, which results from a lurking conviction that they are pursuing a business at variance with the good of man and the will of God, and the sweet repose of a conscience void of offence—will ere long convince such that this law is not less humane towards them, than towards their neighbors.

How great the blessing which this law will secure to hitherto unhappy families. How many such are at this moment trembling at the point whence the husband, the father, or the son, is to ascend to virtue or descend to confirmed vice. Let the promiscuous exposure and sale of ardent spirits be continued, and how many rising hopes are thereby to be dashed; how many more husbands are to become to their families as brutes or incarnate fiends; how many more parents are to mourn over profligate and ruined sons; how many thrice desolate wives and unhappy children are to suffer more than the pangs of death, prolonged through years of helpless despair! But let the base tempter be put out of the way, and how many dawning hopes will brighten into full fruition; how many alienated husbands, fathers, and sons, will return to their first affection and fidelity. This law will thus prove to be a guardian angel of domestic bliss, by recalling men from scenes of dissipation to the duties and pure pleasures of home. How urgent, how irresistible the plea, which comes to us from the bosom of every family in the land, in behalf of this law! The sighs and tears of thousands of worse than widowed wives; the nakedness and hunger of ten thousand of worse than fatherless children; yea,

the terrible sufferings of the victims of intemperance themselves, which they endure in this life, to say nothing of their prospects for eternity—all, all call to us, with tones of subduing eloquence,to sustain and execute this merciful law.

It will also prove to be a powerful friend and benefactor of all the social, public, and political interests of our nation. Other states are now looking up to old Massachusetts. If she does her duty, they will soon follow her example. The effect will spread and roll on through the nation. Within a few years, all spirituous liquors will be banished to the labratories of the chemist and the shelves of the apothecary, where they always properly belonged; and no man will think of calling for a glass of rum, in any other sense than he would for a prescribed portion of hartshorn, or camphor, or calomel; nor even of putting a keg of the article into his cellar, to be used as a family beverage, any more than he would a keg of nitric acid or of corrosive sublimate.

And who can calculate how greatly this law will promote the pecuniary interests and internal improvements of our country. How many millions of money, hitherto annually expended to produce vice, and then to relieve the poverty and misery which it occasions, will this law save, to be devoted to the means of individual and national elevation. I know a considerable town in New England, in which almost every farmer became alienated from the soil which had supported himself and his family, by that very sale and use of rum which this law prohibits. There were two churches in the village, attended by almost no males and by a few females, and most of the time without a preacher. But there were numerous groceries, bar-rooms, tipling houses, where the men were accustomed to assemble, to drink rum, tell stories, kill

time, and corrupt their morals. The farmer would carry to market a load of wood, some bags of grain, or a little meal or butter ; he would then turn in and sit down to take a social glass, talk over the politics, and spend the rest of the day in idleness and dissipation. He would return home at night, with perhaps a few groceries, a jug of rum, and a half-starved team, himself prepared to storm his family and make it as wretched as possible. This practice was continued, till through neglect his farm refused to yield ; and then he would go to the village with increasing frequency, not to carry any thing to market—for he had nothing to carry—but to contract debts, and give mortgages upon what remained of his wasting estate. In this way, within twenty years, almost every farm in that town passed out of the hands of its owner, leaving him and his family in deep poverty. Nor did it fare any better with the mechanics. Thus does the iniquity, which this law is intended to remove, entice, deceive, and rob our fellow citizens ; it beggars their families, by transferring their property, at an enormous sacrifice, into the hands of accumulating distillers, importers, and venders of rum, and other interested capitalists.

The wealth of the country is thus monopolized by a few, and the amount of wealth and the general prosperity of the nation are diminished an hundred fold.

This law is needed also to protect our *political* interests. The corruptions, briberies, and various iniquities practiced at our elections, by means of spirituous liquors, are beyond what most of us have ever imagined. Millions of votes are annually purchased in our country by as many glasses or bottles of rum. In many towns, election days are the most corrupting scenes ever witnessed by civilized

men. They are times for destroying all virtuous habits, all good faith, all correct principle. They are rendered such by the means which this law prohibits. If we would secure the casting of honest votes and the election of worthy men to office, we must banish rum. Our republican institutions demand it; they cannot continue to stand, unless that terrible foe is put out of the way. Our citizens have a right to insist that it be done. They were born to be free. They inherit the soil and the institutions of freemen. It is their high and unalienable privilege, to challenge and protect them as their own. They have the sovereign right to enact laws for their security, and to see that the laws are obeyed. Nay, they *must* do it, or they must consent to crouch down in bondage. The noble men of other days; the men who suffered, fought, bled, and died for our liberties; the men whom we are ever proud to own as our fathers—call to us from the graves where they repose in glory:—"The voice of your father's blood cries to you from the ground, My sons, scorn to be free. In vain we fought, we bled in vain, if you my sons want valor to repel the invaders." Let it never, never be said, that the high-born citizens of Massachusetts want valor to repel the invaders of a law, which their own sovereign will has enacted for the protection of their personal and political freedom. So long as these rocks and fountains, which our fathers gave us, send us forth such clear, gushing, abundant streams of nature's choicest beverage, we will not, for the sake of rum, sell our bodies to the bondage of appetite, nor our souls to the bondage of political domination.

I have said nothing of the interests of religion, for I have chosen to consider this law only as it was designed to be—a legislative enactment to secure the temporal

well-being of the people and the general interests of the state. But if we take a single glance at this subject in a religious view, it rises to immeasurable importance. Let all alcoholic drinks be in this country restricted to their appropriate uses, and not only will a great and decisive step be taken for the prosperity of all our personal, social, political, and national interests, but for the universal triumph of that spiritual and holy kingdom which brings glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men, in its myriads of souls redeemed from sin and prepared for the everlasting joys of heaven.

It is no cause for faint-heartedness, if in the first attempts to enforce this law there should be some shuffling, dodging, contempt of authority, special pleading, and indecision of jurors. The struggle will soon be over. It will not be long before the men who have been unfriendly to the law, will so change their business and their views as to favor it. The time is not distant, when not only they who have, with honest intentions, opposed the law, but also they who have opposed the temperance cause itself, will be found among the firmest and ablest advocates of both. Such there are, men of true patriotism and honest aim, who only need to see that the temperance reform and the temperance law are identified with the true welfare of our country and of mankind, to be induced heartily to espouse them, and to give their talents and influence to their promotion.

What wonders have a few years wrought in this great and difficult work of reform! Passion, prejudice, appetite, interest, and long established custom, have all been arranged against it; and even its own friends have sometimes incautiously exposed it to embarrassments and perils, by fallacious arguments and misdirected zeal. Yet

the cause has continued to advance. It has already, to some extent, pervaded all ranks and descriptions of men; it has reached and enlisted the chief authorities and the highest courts of this and of other nations.

It is to us occasion for special gratitude and joy, that the land which gave rest to the weary feet of the pilgrims; which witnessed their conflicts, their prayers, their praises, which entombed their sacred dust; the land where our liberty was born and cradled; the land of valiant deeds and lofty enterprises; the land of sires and of sons who have ever been first in piety, first in science, first in councils, first in arts, first in conflicts, and first in peace—is now crowning all, by being first in that illustrious cause, which is destined to achieve for mankind a more exalted and glorious victory than was ever won with blood. That the cause of temperance has reached such an eminence in public sentiment, as that two honorable legislatures of Massachusetts, each consisting of more than five hundred of her most intelligent citizens, have judged it safe and expedient to enact and sustain this law, are a sufficient guaranty that it is strong in the hearts of the people and will prevail.

This law was enacted in the right time. Had it been enacted sooner, it would not have been supported. Had its enactment been longer delayed, the cause of temperance would have begun to suffer loss in the public sentiment; for no practice can be permanently condemned by a community, in which it is countenanced by law. If we would make any practice permanently odious, we must enact a law against it; if we then honor the law, the law will disgrace the practice.

All eyes are now turned upon us. We are as a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid. The friends of temperance throughout the country will look, with in-

tense desire, for the success of this law; and all the enemies of temperance will look, with equally eager desire, for its failure. The stake is a great one; it involves the life and happiness of millions. Let all consider well how much is depending upon the success of this law. If any have hitherto doubted of its expediency, through fear that it will not succeed, or that it will be made an occasion of political divisions, let them now come forward in a firm and unbroken phalanx to its support, and the result will surely be not less grateful to them, than to its earliest and most zealous supporters. It is the cause of no sect, no party, no class; it is a great common cause of our common country, our common welfare, our common trust. It holds high rank among the means which heaven has given us, to perpetuate and transmit to our posterity the civil, social, and religious blessings which we inherit. The cause is of God, and it will prevail. Man might as well attempt to stop the sun in his benign journey through the skies, as to prevent this cause from going forth to enlighten and bless the world.

The time is approaching, when it will be reckoned among the wonders of the past, that spirituous liquors once received the sanction of civil law to destroy such multitudes of our fellow men. The streams of liquid fire which have so long been allowed to flow freely over the land, withering, scorching, killing every green thing, will be dried up at the fountains; and verdure, fragrance, beauty, and abundance of fruit, will gladden the earth forever. And who will not respond, Amen.